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Session document

15 December 2003

B5-0536/2003 }
B5-0537/2003 }
B5-0541/2003 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 37(4) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- Françoise Grossetête on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Hannes Swoboda on behalf of the PSE Group
- Monica Frassoni on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- PPE-DE (B5-0536/2003),
- PSE (B5-0537/2003),
- Verts/ALE (B5-0541/2003),

on the Commission's legislative and work programme for 2004
(COM(2003) 645 final)

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European Parliament resolution on the Commission's legislative and work programme for 2004 (COM(2003) 645 final)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 57 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the conclusion of the interinstitutional agreement on 'Better Law-Making' between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission,
 - having regard to the Commission's legislative and work programme (COM(2003) 645 final),
 - having regard to the presentation by the Commission of that programme on 18 November 2003 and the ensuing debate in the presence of Council,
 - having regard to the Brussels European Council of 12 and 13 December 2003,
 - having regard to Rule 37(4) of the Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the annual legislative programme constitutes an indispensable interinstitutional instrument for coordinating, evaluating and monitoring the Union's activities in a transparent and efficient way,
- B. whereas transparency and predictability with regard to the European Union's legislative work are core principles of modern governance,
- C. whereas 2004 will be a significant and crucial year for the European Union, marked by major events, such as the most extensive enlargement the EU has ever known, the approval of a new Constitutional Treaty, the election of a new European Parliament in June, the arrival of Commissioners from the new Member States in May and the establishment of a new College of Commissioners in November,
- D. whereas more transparent and efficient legislative planning on the part of the European Union requires closer involvement of the Council in the interinstitutional legislative programming exercise; whereas the draft interinstitutional agreement 'Better Regulation' provides a basis for such enhanced interinstitutional coordination,
- E. whereas the Brussels European Council of 12-13 December 2003 opened the way for multiannual legislative programming by adopting a first Council triannual strategic programme in accordance with the conclusions of the 2002 Seville European Council,

A. General and institutional remarks

1. Takes note of the Commission's work and legislative programme and the political priorities outlined, namely the absorption of the accession of ten new Member States, stability and sustainable growth;
2. Notes that in view of the special institutional character of the year 2004 the Commission has limited the number of key initiatives to be presented in 2004 to those it considers absolutely necessary and feasible; notes that the proposals to be put forward match the political

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priorities, but takes the view, nevertheless, that the Commission has taken too little action in response to the calls made by the parliamentary committees;

3. Notes that the annual legislative and work programme contains a total of 275 legislative proposals and non-legislative acts, 128 of which directly correspond to the political priorities for 2004 but only 57 of which are legislative acts; notes that a substantial part of the programme for 2004 consists of proposals postponed from previous programmes;
4. Regrets that only about half of the proposals announced in the legislative and work programme for 2003 have actually been adopted by the Commission; hopes that the programme for 2004 is based on more realistic assumptions;
5. Notes that the European Parliament elections and the enlargement and subsequent renewal of the Commission in 2004 represent important challenges with regard to both the implementation of the legislative and work programme for 2004 and the interinstitutional dialogue on the preparation of the programme for 2005;
6. Calls upon its parliamentary committees to examine closely the proposals contained in the legislative and work programme with a view to identifying those proposals that still need to be dealt with under the current legislature;
7. Calls, in view of the imminent end of the current legislature, for close cooperation between the institutions with regard to the management of legislative procedures currently under examination; proposes, while fully respecting the Commission's and Council's rights and prerogatives, the following arrangements:
 - calls upon the Commission to present all proposals that require a decision before the end of the year 2004 in good time, given the time constraints arising from the fact that the electoral process will take place during the 2004 legislative year;
 - calls upon the Commission not to present any other new and far-reaching proposals shortly before the European elections, when Parliament cannot examine them properly owing to the electoral process;
8. Takes the view that, in 2004, it will be necessary to reach agreement with the Commission on an ad hoc procedure governing the various stages in the preparation and presentation of the next legislative programme;
9. Calls upon the Commission to comply with the timetables indicated in its legislative and work programme for the presentation of new proposals; insists, should the Commission envisage deviating from these timetables, on the need to consult the relevant parliamentary committee beforehand;
10. Takes the view that application of the interinstitutional agreement on 'Better lawmaking' will clear the way for wider-ranging coordination of legislative work among the three institutions, and considers that the Council should be involved in an interinstitutional legislative programme;
11. Takes the view that the links between the Commission's programme and the Council's multiannual strategic programme drawn up in December 2003 are as yet far from clear; calls

on the Commission and Council to explain precisely how these two planning processes go together;

12. Points out that the need to revise the institutional framework of the enlarged European Union and to continue the work of establishing a future Constitution for Europe represents one of the major challenges for 2004;
13. Notes that discussions and work are in progress in the Commission on the subject of future priorities for a revised financial framework for post-2006; takes the view that this debate is relevant, but that no decision should be taken at this stage, particularly in view of the imminence of the enlargement of the Union (1 May 2004) and the European elections (June 2004); believes that the decision should be taken by the future Commission once it has been formed and has determined its priorities, and that the final decision must be taken by the budgetary authority;

B. Enlargement, stability and the EU's role in the world

14. Welcomes the fact that on 1 May 2004 ten new Member States will join the European Union; agrees that this historic enlargement will provide a considerable boost to the EU's economic and political potential, but will also represent an enormous challenge for the EU and in particular for the Commission;
15. Recalls in this context the Commission's role in ensuring that the *acquis communautaire* is adhered to in the new Member States, with regard inter alia to the rules on the internal market, in the areas of employment and social protection policy, the environment and justice and home affairs;
16. Points to the importance of economic cohesion within the Union, and deplores the fact that the Commission has not yet presented Parliament with an Action Plan for after May 2004 concerning the efforts needed for the new Member States to catch up economically and converge with the EU 15;
17. Takes the view that the accession of 10 new Member States, the ongoing negotiations with Romania and Bulgaria, the report on the situation in Turkey and the opinion on Croatia's membership application together form the key political priority for 2004, but emphasises that, in the current tense and unstable international situation, the new framework created by an enlarged Union with new neighbourhood relations with countries to the east and in the Mediterranean will make closer coordination and tangible progress in the sphere of the CFSP essential with a view to the establishment of an area of security, peace, stability and prosperity, chiefly involving the Union's new neighbours; welcomes the adoption of a security strategy for the Union and calls on the Commission to implement policies which are consistent with that document;
18. Supports further development of the joint economic area, area of justice and security and research area with Russia, as well as the feasibility studies concerning stabilisation and association agreements with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia-Montenegro;
19. Invites the Commission to devote particular attention to further developments and the progress of reform in Turkey, in particular in the run-up to the progress report for the

December 2004 Council. In the aftermath of the recent terrible bomb attacks invites the Commission to maintain and even foster its engagement in Turkey in order to express our full solidarity;

20. Welcomes the Commission's analysis regarding the need for a reinforced PESD, and invites the Commission and Council to work ever more closely together and to follow the consultation and information procedures of the European Parliament. Insists, furthermore, that the Commission inform the competent European Parliament committee regularly during the budget year about the ongoing implementation of the budget dedicated to external actions, and in particular provide information about specific problems of implementation, in order to avoid a repetition of the 2003 global transfer situation, which clearly demonstrates that political priorities set by Parliament in the budgetary procedure have not been implemented;
21. Regrets the fact that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has disrupted and hampered the Barcelona integration process and applauds the ongoing efforts of the Commission and the High Representative for the CFSP to bring about peace in the region;
22. Upholds the importance of the EU presence in Afghanistan; thanks the European Commission's delegation to Kabul for its efforts; calls for Community and Member State aid to be continued in order to meet the needs of the population;
23. Welcomes the recent communication from the Commission on the budgetisation of the European Development Fund (EDF); reiterates its long-standing support for the budgetisation of the EDF, which will provide for parliamentary supervision and democratic scrutiny of the EU's financial and technical cooperation with the ACP countries; gives the ACP countries an assurance that, through the exercise of its powers as one arm of the budgetary authority, it will prevent the diversion of funds from previous EDFs to other areas of the EU budget, by means of ringfencing and other appropriate measures;
24. Calls on the Commission to give a firm undertaking to draw up a detailed, comprehensive strategy designed to achieve the UN's millennium development objectives, in particular the elimination of poverty, and the objectives in the spheres of health and education;
25. Welcomes the Peace Facility set up by the European Union to finance peacekeeping operations by the African Union; calls on the Commission to take steps to ensure that prompt use is made of this instrument in the various conflict areas in Africa;
26. Encourages the Commission to implement the Action Plan on communicable diseases and reproductive health; insists that concrete action be taken in this area in order to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+10) in 2004;
27. Urges that the European policies aimed at progressing towards the establishment of an area of Freedom, Security and Justice (Tampere agenda) be implemented before the May 2004 deadline; points out that, following the Treaty of Nice, the next stage in the establishment of an area of freedom, security and justice provides for the application of the codecision procedure to most measures concerning asylum and immigration;
28. Recalls the need for major progress towards overall implementation of a European

immigration policy; supports the Commission's proposals aimed at achieving a balance between measures to counteract illegal immigration and measures designed to ensure fair treatment and integration of legal immigrants;

29. Notes the Commission's determination to set up new cooperation programmes with third countries in the area of immigration, programmes which are part of the fight against clandestine immigration and trafficking in human beings;
30. Stresses the need to develop efficient management of the Member States' common borders in the framework of a coherent common policy in collaboration with the European Parliament; draws attention to the need to establish a Community operational structure, with a view to stepping up cooperation on the protection of external frontiers, in particular ahead of the 2004 enlargement;
31. Calls for the development of a new Schengen Information System (SIS) to be carried out in a transparent and democratic manner, which presupposes that Parliament should be consulted and that the provisions on data protection should be complied with;

C. Sustainable development and social policy

32. Agrees that sustainable development should be one of the major work priorities of the Commission; insists, however, that more focus must be given to concrete actions developing this policy towards employment, investment in human resources, prosperity and quality of life for European citizens;
33. Supports all additional efforts to enhance growth and sustainable development, including investment in European Networks; stresses, however, that the beneficial effects of these measures can only be felt if the process of implementation can be accelerated; insists that, alongside the TENs and R&D projects, investment in the human dimension and capital must be given the highest priority; recalls the importance of the Commission's role in this process and declares its own readiness to contribute to speedy decision-making where necessary;
34. Takes the view that the establishment of an integrated electricity market in an enlarged Europe will improve security of supply, but that further efforts should be made to achieve a satisfactory level of electrical interconnectivity; calls for a new proposal on closer coordination in the sector with a view to preventing blackouts similar to those recently suffered by Italy, Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom;
35. Welcomes the support for innovation, research and development, which are fundamental to European growth and the European Union's Lisbon strategy, in particular the action plan which aims to increase investment in research and development in line with the target of 3% of GDP and to attract more and more human resources to the research sector; points out that specific measures must be taken to meet the needs of innovative SMUs active in Europe;
36. Acknowledges that consideration should be given to the idea of establishing a European Research Council, endowed with adequate resources, with a view to strengthening fundamental research in Europe; takes the view that such a body should give priority to bottom-up approaches, cover all scientific areas and be based on scientific criteria;

37. Underlines the importance of smoothly functioning services of general interest; deplores in this context the fact that the Commission again does not intend to propose a framework directive on services of general interest, as requested by Parliament on several occasions and by the European Council meeting in Laeken;
38. Notes that the extension of the 'Lamfalussy' approach to the banking, insurance and UCITS sectors is not included in the Commission's priorities for 2004; supports this extension in principle but reminds the Commission firmly that this support is conditional upon a guarantee of a call-back for the European Parliament on the implementing measures to be adopted in these areas;
39. Underlines again the importance of an effective and dynamic follow-up and implementation of the Lisbon strategy in 2004; considers that the Lisbon structural reform agenda has to result in better, and sustainable, jobs, in order to create a knowledge-based economy; insists that economic, environmental and social reforms must be mutually supportive and must be achieved in close cooperation with all actors concerned; looks to the Commission to step up cooperation with the social partners with a view to drawing up joint strategies and measures to achieve the employment objectives laid down in Lisbon, in particular greater involvement for the elderly and women on the labour market;
40. Deplores the absence of any reference to the European Economic and Social Model; is of the opinion that one consequence of the specificity of the European Economic and Social Model should be that the Commission considers more carefully possible social and environmental consequences of its proposals, in particular when putting forward initiatives to further liberalise economic activities;
41. Calls on the Commission to regard as a priority measures to remedy the serious socio-economic effects of the various plans to reconstitute fish stocks on communities that are highly dependent on fishing;
42. Welcomes the thematic strategies incorporated into the legislative programme, such as those outlined in the sixth action programme on the environment; stresses the importance a Commission initiative aimed at drawing up a thematic strategy on the urban environment;
43. Calls on the Commission to take practical steps to follow up the conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council of 19 and 20 June 2003, which called for the establishment of 'a European diplomacy on environment and sustainable development', and urges the Commission to put forward a specific political strategy in this area; asks to be kept regularly informed, between now and June 2005, about the progress made towards establishing a network of experts, in keeping with the strategy on integrating the environment into external policies adopted in Barcelona;
44. Notes the new measures presented by the Commission with a view to completing the internal market, liberalising the various transport sectors and guaranteeing passengers using all modes of transport increased safety; in that connection, points out that the onus is now on the Council to speed up its efforts to adopt common positions on extremely important matters, such as social provisions in the sphere of road transport, the introduction of a system imposing certain restrictions on the use of heavy good vehicles, public service requirements and the award of public service contracts in the sphere of the transport of passengers by rail,

road and inland waterway, and EU-OPSs in civil aviation;

45. Emphasises that the Commission must implement all the measures required to take account of the increase in life expectancy, a major challenge which the European Union will be required to meet in the near future, and to implement a large-scale information campaign on health and eating habits;
46. Points out that, in the Council's decision of 22 July 2003 on the employment guidelines, the need for an adequate labour supply and the promotion of active ageing is emphasised, with a view to encouraging enterprises to hire or retain older employees, strengthening access to training and changing employer attitudes;
47. Calls on the Commission to put forward practical proposals to build on the momentum established by the European Year of People with Disabilities;
48. Urges that the new generation of Community programmes in the areas of education, culture, youth and audiovisual policy for the post-2006 period should be programmed in good time in order to ensure continuity in terms of both policy and implementation;

D. Eurostat

49. Calls on the Commission to address the Eurostat case and all its aspects with the utmost seriousness; deplores the fact that the action plan provides no proper explanation for the Commission's failure to react for so long to the crisis in Eurostat, despite the evidence which mounted up over the years;
50. Draws the Commission's attention to the deficiencies within its internal communication system, in particular to the need to improve the flow of information at all levels within the Commission in order to ensure that it is in a position to exercise its tasks properly; in this context, however, warns against establishing new bureaucratic structures; is disappointed at the fact that, despite commitments to improve European governance, the Commission is not planning to come forward with a proposal for a code of good administrative behaviour or a regulation on administrative law;
51. Welcomes the commitment expressed by the President of the Commission to strengthening OLAF's operational independence and capability, including internal investigations; expects the Commission to come up with concrete proposals with a view to having them adopted before the enlargement, i.e. by this Parliament; calls on OLAF to complete all its outstanding investigations concerning Eurostat and to submit its final reports to Parliament as soon as possible, and by 15 January 2004 at the latest;
52. Demands that the Commission urgently take all necessary measures to change the culture of secrecy and complacency regarding financial control instruments, so that any wrongdoing can in future be quickly detected and dealt with, and that it take steps to address immediately the need for effective communication between Commissioners and their Directorates-General; calls for existing rules (such as the Commissioners' Code of Conduct and the rules governing the Commission's relationship with OLAF) to be implemented in full, and for the outstanding cases concerning whistle-blowers to be resolved as soon as possible and procedures developed for their protection;

53. Calls on its committees responsible to hold hearings or similar meetings to scrutinise closely developments concerning the Commission's accounting system and calls for that step to be accompanied by an assessment of the overall stage reached in implementing the financial control instruments which form part of the reform package, in the light of the Eurostat affair;
54. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the future Member States that will join the European Union in May 2004.